

STATINTL

Dodd Files \$5,000,000 Suit Against Pearson, Anderson

Washington, May 6 (AP)—Senator Dodd (D., Conn.) filed a \$5,000,000 conspiracy and libel suit today against columnists Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson.

Dodd announced the suit had been filed in the United States District Court here by his lawyer, John F. Sonnett, a former assistant attorney general.

The Senate Ethics Committee is investigating charges of misconduct against Dodd by the columnists. The probe was requested by Dodd, who said he had nothing to conceal.

Other Accusations

Among other things, Pearson and Anderson have accused Dodd of diverting campaign funds to his own use without reporting the money as taxable income and of doing favors for Chicago public relations man Julius Klein in return for expensive gifts.

Pearson, in a statement released by his office, said, "Senator Dodd's suit gives us an opportunity which we have never had before, that of subpoenaing records."

"If the Senate Ethics Committee fails to do a thorough job, I trust that with the power of subpoena we can make up for any Senate oversights."

Dodd Urges Hearings

Asked about the start of the hearings, Dodd said today "the sooner the better."

The 28-page complaint filed in the District Court cited charges made by the columnists, called them false, malicious and defamatory, and said they had caused grievous injury to Dodd's reputation.

The suit said the columns, taken together, pictured Dodd as unfit to be a Senator, as acting as an agent of foreign interests, as interfering with the award of Government contracts in return for bribes, and as unlawfully diverting campaign funds for his personal use.

Each of these charges was taken up and denied in the suit demanding \$5,000,000 in damages plus costs of the court action.

In addition to detailed replies to

various charges about his relations with Klein, Dodd also denied through the suit that he had ever improperly or unlawfully diverted campaign contributions to his own use.

The suit said that Dodd believes that "the use of all funds contributed to him was proper and lawful and that his Federal income tax return fully reflected his taxable income."

In this regard, it added, Dodd had relied on "independent legal advice."

Controversy Over Money

Dodd reportedly received upward of \$100,000 from testimonial dinners in 1961, 1963 and 1965 and controversy has developed over whether these were campaign funds or tax-free gifts to help him meet the extra expenses that go with being a Senator.

President Johnson and Vice President Humphrey were the principal speakers at the dinners.

The suit alleged that at least as early as 1958, and at all times thereafter, Pearson and Anderson conspired to "injure and destroy the business and occupation of the plaintiff."

As part of this alleged conspiracy, the suit said, the columnists induced, aided and abetted employees or former employees of the Senator to remove official and private documents from his files.

Among the charges denied in the suit was one that Dodd had helped a Connecticut firm, Dunbar Associates, Inc., obtain a Government contract to close down a nuclear engineering laboratory in return for the loan of a car.

"Not A Bribe"

The suit said "Dunbar's loan of a car was not a bribe and plaintiff never promoted the interests of Dunbar for improper reasons and plaintiff was not instrumental in the award of the contract. It said Dunbar Associates got the contract because it submitted the lowest bid.

Another complaint in the suit

was that Pearson and Anderson had pictured Dodd as improperly acting in 1961 in concert with Michael Struelens, a representative of the Katanga province, to frustrate United States foreign policy in the Congo.

The suit said that Dodd's trip to the Congo in 1961 was made "with the strong approval of President Kennedy," that an Air Force plane was provided for the trip, and that after his return he received a letter from Dean Rusk, Secretary of State saying his efforts had been beneficial.

Other Charges

Another Pearson-Anderson column, the suit said, falsely stated that Dodd had rendered services for various persons and to the Korean Government in exchange for gifts.

The truth is, the suit said, that Dodd as a Senator "at no time rendered any service to anyone in exchange for any gift or any other consideration or thing of value."

The suit described as false a Pearson-Anderson column stating that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee had recently met behind closed doors and debated whether to dismiss Dodd from the committee because of his purported relationship with Klein.

The bipartisan committee announced last week that it would conduct public hearings to bring out the facts. It set no date, however, saying it wanted to give Dodd "sufficient time to prepare his defense."

Dodd told newsmen that in getting ready for the hearings he was handicapped because he said documents have been stolen from his files. He said it was difficult to tell if they all had been replaced after being copied.